ADDENDA (continued)

Sentence	Acceptability	Grammatical or Logical Reason	Conjunction
(51)	ok	contradictory-emphatic	dan memang 'and indeed'
(52)	*	contradictory Predicate implies absolute class membership.	dan memang 'and indeed'
(56)	*	Form does not exist.	
(58)	*	Unreduplicated form is incompatible with implication of sentence. Predicate which implies absolute class membership is incompatible with reduplication.	
(66)	*	Morphological restriction. Predicate cannot occur with causative suffix -kan.	
(68)	*	Reduplicated form cannot be used in simple statement. This is explained with respect to the speech act. Felicity condition.	
(75)	*	contradictory	none
(77)	*	contradictory	none
(83)	*	redundant	dan 'and'
(85)	*	contradictory	tetapi 'but'
(87)	ok	redundant-emphatic	tetapi 'but'
(88)	*	redundant	dan 'and'
(c)	*	redundant	"and"
(d)	*	redundant	"and really"
(e)	*	redundant	"but"
(f)	ok	redundant-emphatic	"but really"
(90)	*	syntactical reason.	

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* * *

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE TYPOLOGY OF FOCUS AND ASPECT IN NARRATIVE LANGUAGE

Paul J. Hopper

A number of languages possess morphosyntactic devices which indicate that the event or action signalled by a particular sentence is of especial relevance to the discourse of which the sentence is a part, as opposed to other sentences which, not being so marked, are signalled as being incidental, descriptive, or supportive of the main events of the narrative or discourse. These morphosyntactic devices assume typologically a rather wide range of forms, some of which intersect with tense-aspect systems and other parameters, such as transitivity and definiteness. In this paper I shall discuss several types of foregrounding[1] constructions, and shall attempt to show that in at least one case--Malay--it is possible to trace the beginnings of a process whereby a discourse particle has become a tense-aspect marker in some

environments. In general, I hope to show that aspect may be regarded as a discourse phenomenon.

A good illustration of foregrounding is provided by literary French. Practically any formal French narrative can provide numerous examples of the functional contrast between the two tenses known in grammars as "imperfect" (imparfait) and passé historique, the "narrative past". The passé historique is also known as the "preterite" or "simple past"; an equivalent tense in a number of other languages is called the "aorist", and although this term from the point of view of its etymology is practically meaningless, I shall sometimes use it as a functional term denoting events which are foregrounded, kinetic, and successive. In this sense it should not be automatically associated with language-specific aorists, such as the aorist in Greek, the aorist in Georgian, etc. The typological properties of this function are precisely what I hope will emerge from the present paper, and a general characterization of "aorist" cannot be undertaken in a brief or single-language context. Instead, each language discussed will contribute some slightly different insight into the nature of this intriguing facet of language.

The first passage which I shall discuss is from Stendhal's Le Rouge et le Noir. It is as follows:

Comme tous les êtres médiocres que le hasard met en présence d'un grand général, Julien ne comprenait rien à l'attaque executée par le jeune russe sur le coeur de la belle anglaise. Les quarante premières lettres n'étaient destinées qu'à se faire pardonner la hardiesse d'écrire. Il fallait faire contracter à cette douce personne, qui peut-être s'ennuyait infiniment, l'habitude de recevoir des lettres peut-être un peu moins insipide que sa vie de tous les jours.

Un matin, on remit une lettre à Julien. Il reconnut les armes de madame de Fervaques, et brisa le cachet avec un empressement qui lui eût semblé bien impossible quelques jours auparavant.

'Like all those mediocre beings whom chance places in the presence of a great general's manoeuvers, Julien understood nothing of the attack carried out by the young Russian on the heart of the beautiful Englishwoman. The first forty letters were destined only to instill into this gentle person, who was perhaps infinitely bored, the habit of receiving letters possibly a little less insipid than her everyday life.

One morning, a letter was handed to Julien. He recognized the coat of arms of Mme de Fervaques, and broke the envelope with an urgency which would have seemed impossible for him a few days previously.' (Stendhal, 556-557)

The typical features of foregrounding are well represented in the use of the passé historique in the second paragraph, as opposed to the imperfect in the first paragraph. The new, dynamic events, the actions which carry the narrative forward, are expressed in the verbs remit, reconnut, and brisa. The imperfects, on the other hand, are used to construct the background setting for the main actions. The imperfects are explanatory, the passé historique verbs are kinetic. A precis of the story of the novel could be constructed on the basis of the passé historique clauses alone, although of course crucial material involving characterization, description, motivation, and the other areas which give the

novel its aesthetic texture would be missing. Among the features which are typical of foregrounding, we find:

(1) The passé historique sentences are chronologically sequenced. No event depicted in a passé historique clause overlaps in time with another passé historique sentence.

(2) In large measure because of the stricture in (1), the verbs in the passé historique have a strong tendency to be either lexically punctual, or to receive a punctual interpretation. For example, the verb reconnaître (reconnut) "recognize" is lexically punctual, as opposed to the non--punctual connaître "know", which is typically imperfect, and it is rare to find the reverse distribution (imperfect reconnaissait, passé historique connut).

(3) The foregrounding sentences have a strong tendency to show a more even distribution of new and old information than do the backgrounding sentences. The passé historique paragraph in this example has a completely natural sequentiality of topics: Julien, which is new in the initial sentence, is introduced in the predicate, and the initial sentence itself is introduced by typically "thematic" material ("un matin, on..."). Subsequent clauses continue with Julien as the subject/topic, in the first one after this being pronominalized to il, and in the next one with even this element deleted ("et brisa").

By contrast, the imperfect sentences (first paragraph) show a directly opposite range of characteristics:

(1a) Sentences with imperfects are permitted to depict events which are simultaneous with those of other sentences, or at least in large measure overlapping them.

(2a) Commensurate with this characteristic, verbs in the imperfect tend to be durative or iterative rather than punctual. This durative-iterative meaning may be lexically determined, or it may be a property which emerges in the discourse context, to a large extent of course because of the complete or partial overlap in chronological sequencing.

(3a) The imperfect sentences tend to show a marked distribution of topics within the discourse. Unlike the passé historique sentences, all three of the main clauses in the imperfect have different subjects. This characteristic of background clauses is far from consistent, but it is clear that without the requirement of strict sequentiality, imperfect sentences have a great deal more freedom of choice in topics. Indeed, two sentences which depict simultaneous events could only with some difficulty have identical topics.

The complementary functions of the imperfect and the passé historique in French may be summed up in the following table:

	Imperfect	Passé Historique
Foreground	-	+
Overlapping	+	-
Punctual	-	+
Topic-shift	+	-

It is apparently not at all uncommon for languages to express all or some of these functions overtly. Furthermore, these same functions frequently intersect with the phenomenon --or phenomena--known as aspect, about which more will be said below, and perhaps eventually to "tense". As an example of the latter in its relation to discourse, we may note that the compound pluperfect tense of many Western European languages is an explicitly backgrounding device which at the same time expresses the anteriority of an event to some previously mentioned event. Because an event in the pluperfect

can never be strictly sequential to the previous event, it can never be formed in the same way as a passé historique (aorist) type. In French, for example, there are no compound tenses with pluperfect meaning in which the auxiliary is in the passé historique: il avait lu "he had read", il était allé "he had gone", but not *il eut lu, il fut allé. Because of the implied nonsequentiality of the imperfect, it is easier for an imperfect to receive a pluperfect interpretation; if we consider events to be signalled in sequence by S_1-S_2-S_3, etc., and grammatically the linguistic sequence is S_2-S_1-S_3, the non-sequentiality of S_2 to S_1 is in French amply indicated already by the use of the imperfect, and a compounded pluperfect is not necessary (though it may be used). In English, by contrast, where the simple preterite has no signal of sequentiality, a pluperfect is necessary. Hence many French imperfects must be translated as English pluperfects:

> Le compte Norbert parut dans la bibliothèque vers les trois heures; il venait étudier un journal, pour pouvoir parler politique le soir, et fut bien aise de trouver Julien, dont il avait oublié l'existence.... (Stendhal, 340). 'Count Norbert appeared in the library towards 3 o'clock; he had come to study a newspaper, so as to be able to talk politics in the evening, and was very glad to run into Julien, whose existence he had forgotten...'

The next language which I shall discuss, Malay, has a radically different set of devices for indicating foregrounding and event sequencing. The illustrations which I shall use are both from the mid-19th century narrative prose of the Malaccan writer Abdullah bin Abdul-Kadir, Munshi, and should not necessarily be transferable in respect of this feature to modern usage. It might be mentioned in passing that overt narrative devices can rather easily come to be confined to a particular "register", and that this register would coincide with that of formal literary usage, as has happened in the case of French passé historique. The passages chosen are taken from Abdullah's autobiography, commonly known as the Hikayat Abdullah, and his Voyage, known as the Kesah Pelayaran Abdullah. Because Malay is less widely known than the other languages with which I shall be concerned, I have provided an interlinear translation and have underlined the verb in each clause.

I. Sa-bermula maka pada suatu hari Tuan Raffles itu
        One day   Mr. Raffles

tengah berkata-kata dengan juru-tulis-nya dari-hal hendak
was   talking   with his secretary about wishing

membalas surat ka-pada raja Sambas,   maka tiba-tiba
to send   a reply to   Prince Sambas, and suddenly

datang-lah sa-orang orang Melayu membawa enam buah
arrived   a Malay man   bringing   six

kepala-kepala durian, di-sangka-nya Tuan Raffles itu
pieces of   durian, thinking   Mr. Raffles

hendak membeli durian, lalu di-bawa-nya masok ka-dalam
wanted to buy   durians, and brought them into the

rumah ia berdiri di-pintu; maka Tuan Raffles pun mendapat-
house he stood at the door and Mr. Raffles   got

-lah   bau   durian itu,   maka dengan segera-nya
the smell of the durians, and immediately

di-tutup-nya hidong-nya, lari-lah ia naik ka-atas
held   his nose   ran   he upstairs

Maka hairan-lah semua orang melihatkan hal-nya itu
And amazed   all people   to see   this thing

berlari,   tiada ketahui ia tiada boleh menchium bau
of running, they didn't know he   could not take the smell

durian.   Maka se-bentar lagi di-panggil-nya akan supai
of durian. And after a moment he called to the sepoy

yang menjaga   pintu itu, kata-nya: "Siapa bawa buah durian
who guarded   the door, saying   Who brought the durian

ka-mari?" Maka di-unjokkan-nya orang Melayu itu, maka
here   And he pointed to the   Malay man, and

di-suroh-nya keluar lekas-lekas, serta ia memberi perentah
he ordered him outside quickly,   and   he gave   order

ka-pada supai itu, "Sa-orang-pun jangan beri bawa lalu
to the sepoy,   No-one   allow to bring

durian dari pintu ini." Maka dari-pada hari itu sa-orang
durian through this door. And from that day   no one

pun tiada-lah berani membawa durian lagi. Maka baharu-lah
                bold enough to bring durian again. And only

aku ketahui, bahwa tabiat Tuan Raffles pada masa itu
then did I realized that   Mr. Raffles at that time

sakali-kali tiada tahu makan durian...
had been wholly unaccustomed to eating durian...

Maka se-bentar lagi turun-lah ia ka-bawah,   kata-nya:
And a moment later came down he downstairs, saying:

"Sakit kepala sahaya, sebab menchium bau buah durian
My head aches   from smelling the odor of the durian;

itu; maka terlalu jahat makanan itu." Maka tersenyum-lah
     a most evil   food is that   And   smiled

aku sakalian menengar perkataan-nya itu, karna berlainan
all of us   to hear his words   because different

tabiat-nya dari-pada orang lain; barang yang di-sukai oleh
his habits from other people's;   a think which was like by

orang, di-benchikan-nya. Maka sebab itu jikalau ada
people, was hated by him. And because of that,   whenever

orang-orang membawa durian di-halaukan   oleh
there were people bringing durian, they were sent away by

supai. (Abdullah, Hikayat, 63-64)
the sepoy.

II. Hata beberapa bulan lamanya, maka kedengaran-
     Now after a few months,   was heard

-lah khabar ka-Singapura mengatakan negeri   Kelantan
    the news in Singapore saying that the province of Kelan-

ada perang.   Maka segala sampan pukat yang ada di-sana
tan was a war.   And all fishing-boats which were there were

tiada di-lepas raja keluar, karna adat negeri Melayu,
forbidden by the Resident from leaving because it was the

                              apabila ada perang dalam
law in the Malay province, whenever there was war in the

negeri,   maka segala perahu-perahu dagang yang ada
province, that all boats for commerce which were

di-dalam negeri itu tiada boleh keluar dan masok. Kemudian
in   the province could not enter or leave   Then

maka di-suroh-lah oleh saudagar-saudagar itu sa-buah
     it was ordered by the merchants   a passenger

sampan tambang membawa surat ka-pada Kapitan China
vessel   to take a letter to the head of the Chinese

Kelantan.   Shahadan telah sampai-lah surat
community in Kelantan. Now   after arrived the letter,

itu, maka segera di-balas-nya surat mengatakan
     at once cameback   a letter saying

sa-sunggoh-nya Kelantan ada perang... (Abdullah, Kesah, 1)
     indeed   Kelantan was at war...

III. Kemudian kelihatan-lah babi hutan tiga ekur
      Then   were seen   three wild pigs

di-tepi pantai.   Maka turun-lah orang sekochi
on the edge of the shore. And the crewmen disembarked

pergi mengambil ayer.   Maka apabila masok-lah ka-dalam
and went to fetch water. And when they entered   the

hutan,   maka bertemu-lah dengan Jakun. Maka apabila ia
forest,   they ran into   a Jakun. And when he

melihat orang datang, maka lari-lah ia masok hutan...
saw   the men coming. he ran off   into the forest...

(Abdullah, Kesah, 7).

In Malay narrative language, kinetically new events
which are highly relevant to the story line are marked by
suffixing the particle lah to the verb.[2] In such sentences,
the verb generally appears in the initial position. This ini-
tial verb is without the prefix meng, which, when attached
to lexically specified verbs, denotes "active voice" (actually
a neutral distribution of information over the sentence). If
the verb is transitive and is in the key narrative function,
it is invariably in some form of the passive.

This initial position of the verb, and the absence of
the meng-prefix on the verb, are not found if the subject is

"topicalized", i.e. is placed ahead of the verb. Topicaliza-
tion takes place under quite restricted discourse contitions,
namely when the subject is not new in the narrative, has been
mentioned fairly recently (almost always in the clause pre-
ceding the previous clause), and is not identical with the last
named possible subject. In passage I, for example, where
Raffles catches the smell of the durian, we see that the sub-
ject of the preceding clause is the Malay man bringing in the
durian; however, Raffles is not "new"--on the contrary, he
is the center of attention of the narrative. Consequently,
topicalization takes place: the verb is given the meng prefix
(in this case, men-), the subject is fronted, and the enclitic
pun is added to the subject noun. On the other hand, if
Raffles had been the last potential subject mentioned, we
would have had, in place of:
    maka Tuan Raffles pun mendapat-lah bau durian itu
more likely the following:
    (maka di-dapat-nya-lah bau durian itu)
    'was caught by him the smell of the durians'
The story of Raffles and the durian is a short, balanced,
and complete narrative. It is therefore instructive to take
all the events marked with the particle lah and ignore the
others. It is noticeable that the clauses not marked with lah
are incidental and supportive, or denote events which occur
"off-stage"; they are not skeletal, kinetic events, but are
essentially subsidiary ones:
    (1) Maka tiba-tiba datang-lah sa-orang orang Melayu
        membawa enam buah kepala-kepala durian.
        'And suddenly there arrived a Malay man bringing
        six durians'
    (2) Maka Tuan Raffles pun mendapat-lah bau durian itu
        'And Mr. Raffles caught the smell of the durian'
    (3) lari-lah ia naik ka-atas
        'he ran upstairs'
    (4) Maka hairan-lah semua orang melihatkan hal-nya
        itu berlari
        'And everyone was amazed to see this thing of him
        running'
    (5) Maka se-bentar lagi turun-lah ia ka-bawah
        'And a little later he came downstairs again'
    (6) Maka tersenyum-lah aku sekalian menengar
        perkataannya itu.
        'And we all smiled to hear his words'
These six clauses provide a synopsis of the dynamic
line of the episode, in the sense that without them the story
would be unintelligible. They are successive events, each
one dependent on the completion of the preceding one. This
is not to say, of course, that the sentences without lah con-
tain no important detail at all, but simply that they are not
viewed as the crucial foci of the narrative. For example,
the exchange between Raffles and the sepoy, and Raffles' in-
structions to the Malay, are not marked with lah, and in
part this is because the 'verb' of saying here--kata-nya--is
not a verb but a noun, "his words". However, there are
kinetic verbs involved here, such as di-panggil-nya "he
called", di-unjokkan-nya "he pointed to him", di-suroh-nya
"he ordered him", and all these events, which occur while
Raffles is still upstairs and therefore, in a sense, off-stage,
are designated as background. Raffles' holding his nose,
although a kinetic event, is likewise relegated to the status
of a side-show, and the reason for this is clear: not only is
it of minor importance to the narrative, but it is also simul-
taneous with Raffles' rushing upstairs. Since Malay does
not distinguish between full verbs and participles, as most
inflected languages do, -lah serves as the equivalent of a

finite verb, and absence of lah often resembles a "participle"; but of course, this analogy is only possible because participles are themselves a backgrounding device.

The restriction of -lah to sequential events, and its exclusion from simultaneous or overlapping events, is an important parallel to the French passé historique. The particular difference between the French and the Malay constructions lies in the greater frugality of Malay narrative with its event-centered, foregrounding construction. In French, the use of the passe historique is categorical with all foregrounded sentences. Malay usage, by contrast, seems to be take clusters of events and mark the central event in each cluster with -lah. French narrative is more liberal with its assignment of the foregrounding feature perhaps precisely because French verbs are obligatorily marked for tense and aspect. Conceivably we should always look for this typological difference between an inflected language like French and a language like Malay in which inflection, as opposed to derivation, is absent.

Practically all grammars of Malay devote space to discussing the particle -lah, and the usage described generally coincides with the traditional usage exemplified in the writings of Abdullah Munshi. The following account is taken from M. B. Lewis' grammar, but the functions described are essentially the same as those mentioned in the Abbé Favre grammar of 1876 (cf. p. 148). Lewis gives the following contexts:

(1) To emphasize one particular word:

Anjing-lah yang hilang, bukan kuching
   dog   which lost   not   cat
'It was a dog I lost, not a cat'

(2) In commands or prohibitions, to make the order less peremptory:

Jangan-lah marah
don't   be-angry
'Now don't be angry'

(3) "In written narrative, it is of frequent occurrence after a simple verb, giving the effect of a past tense. In such sentences, the subject frequently comes after the verb." (p. 244).

"In written Malay, pun, attached to the subject, is used as a partner to lah, when that particle, attached to the verb, denotes past time." (p. 243)

Pergi-lah ia
   go   he
'He went'

Ia pun mati-lah
he   die
'He died'

Maka pada malam itu Hang Mahmud pun tidor-lah
and   on   night that   sleep
'That night, Hang Mahmud slept'

I have felt it worthwhile to quote Lewis on the use of -lah and pun for two reasons. One is that, although standard grammars of Malay correctly describe the focusing function of -lah (misleadingly naming it an "emphatic" function, however), they have consistently missed the rule-

governed nature of its use in narrative, typically dismissing its appearance with qualifiers such as sometimes, frequently, etc. Moreover, the "preterite" function of -lah mentioned by Lewis is seen as independent of its focusing function. It is only when a discourse analysis of -lah is approached that the essential unity of these two features can be seen. Similarly, the use of pun is also far from being an arbitrary choice of the writer. Pun is attached to topics which are not completely new to the narrative, but which have not been the most recent participant mentioned. -Lah is a focusing particle, whose function is to indicate that the word to which it is a part, as well as any dependent clauses, are a central part of the narrative, and are foregrounded. These two functions--foregrounding and focusing--are not separable, but are aspects of one and the same principle.

It should now be clear why -lah can in addition denote past time. We have seen that the aoristic function of -lah requires a condition of strict sequentiality with the preceding verb + -lah clause. This sequential (non-overlapping) property of -lah involves necessarily a view of the action which it signifies as something completed; the next turn of events in the narrative cannot be initiated until the preceding event signalled by -lah has been completed. In narrative, therefore, the idea of anteriority is strongly attached to -lah, so much so that in some contexts it has a clear 'pluperfect' sense, provided the principle of strict chronological sequentiality is observed. (In this respect, it differs from the French use of the imperfect in a pluperfect sense which I have discussed above, where precisely the opposite phenomenon is found: sequentiality is not observed, and the verb is therefore in the non-aorist). In passage II, we find this example:

Shahadan telah sampai-lah surat itu, maka segera
Then   already arrive letter   at   at once

di-balas-nya surat mengatakan...
send in reply letter saying...

'Then no sooner had that letter arrived, than an
answering letter was sent, saying that...'

And in passage III, there is a nice contrast in two adjacent clauses introduced by apabila "when":

Maka apabila masok-lah kedalam hutan, maka bertemu
And   when   entered   the forest   they met

dengan Jakun. Maka apabila ia melihat orang datang,
a Jakun And   when   he   saw   the men coming,

maka lari-lah ia masok hutan.
he ran   into the forest

Masok-lah in the first clause is necessarily prior to bertemu in the second clause: "When they had entered..." However, melihat carries no connotation of anteriority to lari-lah--it is either simultaneous or overlapping, a "participial" use: "Seeing the men coming, he ran..." In other words, the anteriority of the lah-clause to the following clause is asserted, whereas anteriority is not asserted when the first clause does not have a verb with lah.

Semantic-syntactic settings such as this are perfect contexts for a change or extension of functions in a category. Focusing of the verb is associated with an "aorist" or

narrative function involving strict chronological sequencing of events. The indication of sequentiality is extended to mean the discreteness and completion of each event so marked, and hence to the idea of the anteriority of one event to the following one. This meaning of anteriority is easily extended to one of completed aspect or past tense. This appears to have happened in the case of lah in Malay, grammatical descriptions of which almost always refer to its preterite function. Since this supposed preterite function is discourse conditioned, it is clear that it can hardly be a "preterite" in the sense of the "past tense" of English or German, but it does suggest that typologically the possibility of a diachronic change from a focus marker to a tense marker exists, and it would be interesting to discover other examples of such a process.

I turn now to Old English, in which the distinction of foregrounding and backgrounding devices is manifested in a less obvious way, but in which a perhaps more primitive system involving only word order can be seen. I have shown that word-order is also an important part of the Malay foregrounding technique also, but there the use of particles (-lah, pun) has given the language overt morphosyntactic markers which are not present in Old English.

The earliest extended examples of narrative prose in English are the Old English Chronicles, of which the manuscript commonly known as the Parker Manuscript represents the most archaic version. Consisting as they do of annual entries varying from single isolated events to narrative accounts of paragraph length or more, the Chronicles provide excellent material for the study of sentences without any discourse context as well as those within narrative sequences of varying degrees of tightness and sequentiality. The chronicle genre, too, is not an isolated phenomenon but one which recurs in other medieval societies, permitting rather close cross-linguistic comparisons to be made. The usual problems of interpreting the values of different construction types in a "dead" language exist, yet the interpretation of focus and aspect phenomena are difficult in "live" languages also, such as Czech and Russian. It is sometimes necessary to resort to a broad statement of general principles and the assumption that apparent violations of these principles are deliberate attempts by the writer to gain a specific stylistic effect, such as rapid tempo or vividness.

The distinction between "aorist" sentences and sentences representing isolated or backgrounded events is signalled by two fundamental types of sentence in Old English, that in which the nominal 'direct object' precedes the verb (OV), and that in which the nominal 'direct object' follows the verb (VO). The direct object may be represented by a directional complement in construction with the verb, an adverbial phrase similarly directly associated with the verb, or even simply by some other typological feature diagnostic of the two syntactic types OV and VO. "Aorist" sentences in Old English narrative sequences, i.e. those which, like the French passé historique, denote kinetically new events, foregrounded in the narrative, serving to advance the story line, in chronological succession to the preceding event, follow the OV syntactic pattern (object before verb). Sentences signalling events which are in isolation, including those which initiate a narrative sequence; which are descriptive, or backgrounded, or simulataneous with "aorist" events---these sentences have a syntax in which the verb is advanced to the front of the sentence, either immediately after the subject or immediately before it, but in any case ahead of any larger constituents of the predicate. These are VO sentences.

Intersecting with these broad principles of Old English sentence structure are, in the language of the Parker Manuscript, already several minor features which foreshadow the growing tendency of English to generalize VO syntax, such as the tendency to place adverbial phrases after the verb in OV clauses. It is clear, however, that any attempt to trace the development of VO syntax in English which relies purely on statistical counts without taking into consideration the functions of different word-order types, and especially the position of a clause in narrative structure, can only be superficial. For example, the tendency to balance nominal subjects and nominal objects on either side of the verb is not due to the relative 'heaviness' of nouns as opposed to pronouns, but is rather related to the greater likelihood of finding pronouns in interior narrative sequences. As I have pointed out, a vitally important characteristic of the typology being discussed here has to do with the degree of focusing (assertion) of the subject in a coordinated clause. Typically, a tight narrative sequence, viewed as a complete and coherent episode--the kind which consists of aorist clauses--does not contain many switches and changes of subject. In Malay, for example, we saw that an aorist sentence, one whose verb is fronted with the enclitic -lah, is constrained to having a subject mentioned in the preceding clause, and that exceptions to this rule required special morphosyntactic processes (topicalization of the subject, addition of the enclitic pun on to the topic noun). Usually, a narrative episode divided into chronologically discrete events pragmatically requires identity of topic-subject across all clauses. Often enough the high degree of presupposition associated with the subject in aorist clauses means that overt expression of the subject can be dispensed with. This in turn means a reduction of the crowding of sentence elements before the verb in OV (object-verb) sentences, because these are the very type in which an overt subject is missing. In Old English, if 'heavy' elements come after the verb in aorist clauses, these elements are always in some sense inessential to the main thought of the clause, such as locative 'afterthoughts'.

The pattern of verb position in the prose of the Chronicle appears to be as follows: Each narrative episode is itself divided into several smaller episodes each of which is introduced by a clause with VO word order. This 'episodic' word order is not strictly speaking so much VO as VS, i.e. we characteristically find the initial verb followed by the subject. The distribution of word order types in a somewhat extensive Old English narrative is thus roughly as follows:

MAIN EPISODE	:	#ꝥ X S V Y #
MINOR EPISODE	:	# (þa) V S X #
INTERIOR CLAUSE	:	# (ond) X O V Y #

There are variations on these basic types, some of which are lexically determined. Fundamentally, however, what determines the type of word order is the degree of newness of the subject, and a close parallel can be seen between the Malay and Old English Functions:

1. Backgrounding
   Malay: S V O   Old English: S V O
2. Narrative Event
   Malay: V-lah S O   Old English: S O V
3. Narrative Event, Change of Subject
   Malay: S pun V-lah O Old English: V S O

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At this point a diachronic observation can be made. Inspecting the Malay and Old English usage, we can see that the second function (Narrative Event, i.e. "aorist") has the verb at the periphery of the clause. The backgrounding function has the verb in the middle, between subject and object. The third function, a rrative internal but with change of subject, i.e. the Minor Episode function, has the fronted verb in Old English. In Malay, the verb is not moved to the end of the sentence, because this pattern is not permitted in Malay; instead the verb is moved only one place back, past the subject, and the subject, in the topic position, has pun. Now there are indications that the "aorist" word order in both languages is extremely archaic, and that middle position (SVO) is innovative. In Austronesian, VS is the normal order in both the Polynesian and the Philippine (Western Austronesian) groups, suggesting that it was in fact the word order of Proto-Austronesian. On the other hand, the Indo-European languages have preserved many traces of an early SOV syntactic type, of which numerous relics still exist in English (e.g. the order of Adjective and Noun).[3] It thus appears that the aorist, foregrounding word order is typically conservative, and conversely that backgrounding, imperfective word order is innovating. Why should this be so?

The answer to this is in the very feature which is the prime indeed the defining property of aorist word order: it is the word order which characterizes sentences having a balanced, unmarked distribution of constituents, without disruptive topicalizations or other dislocations: the subject is old information, and the predicate new, with the main focus being on the complement of the verb. In this type of sentence the characteristic word order is not subject to change. Word order changes when a dislocation becomes grammaticalized and loses its marked value, e.g. when the subject NP in a VSO language becomes topicalized and placed before the verb. In other words, the higher degree of flexibility in an imperfective (non-aorist) sentence type is more conducive to the development and fixing of new word order types than the less vulnerable, "protected", aorist type.

Old English narrative will be illustrated here with the episode of Cyneheard and Sigebryht, in the Parker Chronicle 755 A.D. About two-thirds of the episode is quoted here, together with a modern English translation:

Her Cynewulf benam Sigebryht his rices ond West Seaxna wiotan for unryhtum dædum, buton Hamtunscire; ond he hæfde þa he oþ he ofslog þone aldormon þe him lengest wunode; ond hiene þa Cynewulf on Andred afdræfde, ond he þær wunade oþ þæt hiene an swan ofstang æt Pryfetes flodan; ond he wræc þone aldormon Cumbran; ond se Cynewulf oft miclum gefeohtum feaht wiþ Bretwalum; ond ymb .xxxi. wint. þæs þe he rice hæfde, he wolde adræfan anne æþeling se wæs Cyneheard haten, ond se Cyneheard wæs þæs Sigebryhtes broþur; ond þa geascode he þone cyning lytle werode on wifcyþþe on Merantune, ond hine þær berad, ond þone bur utan beeode ær hyne þa men onfunden þe mid þam kyninge wærun; ond þa ongeat se cyning þæt, ond he on þa duru eode, ond þa unheanlice hine werede, oþ he on þone æþeling locude, ond þa utræsde on hine, ond hine miclum gewundode, ond hie alle on þone cyning wæron feohtende oþ þæt hie hine ofslægenne hæfdon; ond þa on þæs wifes gebærum onfundon þæs cyninges þegnas þa unstilnesse, ond þaþider urnon swa hwelc swa þonne gearo wearþ

ond radost; ond hiera se æpeling gehwelcum feoh ond feorth gebead, ond hiera nænig hit geþicgean nolde; ac hie simle feohtende wærun oþ hie alle lægon butan anum Bryttiscum gisle, ond se swiþe gewundad wæs. Ða on morgenne gehierdun þæt þæs cyninges þegnas þe him be æftan wærun þæt se cyning ofslægen wæs, þa ridon hie þider, ond his aldormon Osric, ond Wiferþ his þegn, and þa men þe he be æftan him læfde ær, ond þone æpeling on þære byrig metton þær se cyning ofslægen læg. (Earle and Plummer, 46-48)

'In this year, Cynewulf, and the West Saxon elders, deprived Sigebryht of his kingdom for unrighteous deeds, except for Hampshire, and he retained that until he slew the alderman who remained with him the longest. And then Cynewulf drove him off to Andred, and he stayed there until a herdsman stabbed him at Priffet's Flood, and he avenged the alderman, Cumbra. And this Cynewulf frequently fought against the Cornishmen in mighty battles. And about 31 years after he came to the throne, he was about to expel a nobleman who was named Cyneheard, and this Cyneheard was Sigebryht's brother. And he (Cyneheard) found the king with a small band of followers at Merton, visiting a mistress, and overtook him there, and surrounded the hut before the men who were with the king realized it. And then the king perceived it, and went out of the door and defended himself valiantly, until he saw the nobleman, and then he rushed out upon him, and wounded him grievously, and then they all began to fight against the king until they had slain him. And then, hearing the woman's screams, the king's thanes caught wind of the disturbance, and they rushed thither, as many as were swift and ready. And the nobleman offered them money and their lives, but none of them would accept it, but they fought on until they were all dead except for one British hostage, and he was sorely wounded. Then the next morning the king's thanes who were waiting at a distance heard of it, and they rode thither, including his alderman Osric, his thane Wiferth, and the men whom he had previously left waiting farther back, and came across the nobleman inside the fortified house where the king lay slain.'

This episode, besides being one of the longest entries in the Parker Chronicle, is one of the most archaic-seeming pieces of extended prose in the early Old English period, and therefore offers excellent data for study of functional uses of word order in the period before the generalization of SVO syntax in English. We observe that the introductory sequences, the ones which set the scene for the main action, tend to have VO word order. For example, up to line 9 (...wæs þæs Sigebryhtes broþur), where the actual narrative story of Cynewulf and Cyneheard may be said to begin, the events of Cynewulf's life are signalled as background in the following clauses:

1. Cynewulf benam Sigebryht his rices
    'Cynewulf deprived Sigebryht of his kingdom'

2. se Cynewulf oft miclum gefeohtum feaht wiþ Bretwalas
    'This Cynewulf often fought against the Cornishmen in mighty battles'

(note that this sentence is VO, not OV: <u>miclum gefeohtum</u> is dative/instrumental, and the 'direct object' or focused complement is <u>wiþ Bretwalas</u>. See the translation).

3. he wolde adræfen anne aþeling
   'He was about to expel a nobleman'

OV syntax occurs either with dynamic events, of direct relevance to the immediately following main narrative, or in clauses which can be categorized as "subordinate". It must be stressed, however, that what is important in subordination is not the syntactic fact of embedding, but rather the distribution of presupposed and asserted material, i.e., the focus structure. It is because this focus structure tends to be similar in foregrounded sentences and "subordinate" clauses that both have, in Old English, a parallel word order. The central fact of episode narrative is the following: Events which are narrated in strict chronological sequence will tend to have similar subjects with a high degree of "topicality" (old information) and predicates with high assertiveness, balancing informational salience about evenly on the verb and the other members of the predicate. It is this kind of sentence in Old English which shows OV syntax. On the other hand, sentences with VO syntax have a relatively high informational content in their subjects (e.g. the subject is very frequently a full noun). The use of VO syntax in backgrounded sentences is thus ultimately a function of an imbalance in the distribution of focus in these sentences.

As an example of what is meant, let me take the clause (line 6):

ond he wræc þonne aldormon Cumbran
'And he avenged the alderman, Cumbra'

The clause is a clear example of VO word order. In its context, this word order might seem exceptional, since the event is dynamic, belongs in the narrative sequence concerning Sigebryht, and is evidently sequential to the other events in the same episode. A closer inspection of the sentence, however, reveals that the event is not a single, discrete happening, but in fact <u>sums up</u> the main events of the episode. The taking of vengeance is not sequential to the slaying of Sigebryht, but simultaneous with it; it is a paraphrase, in fact. It should be translated not as given: "and he avenged the alderman, Cumbra," but rather: "and he did this out of vengeance for the alderman, Cumbra." The focus, or main assertion, of the clause is not on any of the major constituents (subject, verb, object), but on the circumstance--in this case, the motive--of the action. Of course, because the motive is inherent in the lexical content of the verb, there is in a sense verb focus, but this is inevitable when a word contains two or more "vertical" constituents which are separately focusable (e.g. <u>devour</u>, <u>murder</u>). There is a whole range of phenomena involving lexical properties of words and their behavior with respect to both "aspect" and focus which cannot be dealt with in the present paper.

The use of OV syntax in dynamic sequential narrative is illustrated throughout the story of Cynewulf and Cyneheard. The subsidiary discourse structure of minor episodes, "new turns" in the narrative, can also be observed; these new turns are marked by VS syntax, i.e. verb-initial, typically preceded by the particle þa. In the following the minor episodes are numbered I, II, III, and sequenced events

within each minor episode are numbered with Arabic numerals:

I. 1. þa geascode he þone cyning
      'Then he found the king'

   2. ond hine þær berad
      'And overtook him there'

   3. ond þone bur utan beeode
      'And surrounded the hut'

II. 1. ond þa ongeat se syning þæt
       'And then the king perceived it'

    2. ond he on þa duru eode
       'And went out of the door'

    3. ond þa unheanlice hine werede
       'And defended himself valiantly'

    4. oþ he on þone æpeling locude
       'Until he saw the nobleman'

III. 1. ond þa utræsde on hine
        'And then he rushed out upon him'

     2. ond hine micle gewundode
        'And wounded him grievously'

     3. ond hie alle on þone cyninge wæron feohtende
        'And they all began to fight against the king'

     4. oþ þæt hie hine ofslægenne hæfdon
        'Until they had slain him'

etc.

It is noticeable that within each minor episode, changes of subject are not commonly found. However, there is no 'grammatical' constraint against unlike subjects within minor episodes. Such changes of subject, when they do occur, are typically carried by a noun in the nominative case, and if the sentence is of the OV type, a constituent of the preceding clause is taken up as a pronoun, this pronoun being placed at the head of the sentence, e.g.

Minor Episode:

1. ond þa on þæs wifes gebærum onfundon þæs cyninges þegnas þa unstilnesse
   'And then, hearing the woman's screams, the king's thanes caught wind of the disturbance'

2. ond þaþider urnon
   'And they rushed thither'

3. ond <u>hiera</u> æ æþeling gehwelcum feoh ond feorh gebead
   'And the noblemen offered them money and their lives'

4. ond <u>hiera</u> nænig hit geþicgean nolde
   'But none of them would accept it'

5. ac hie simle feohtende wæron
   'But they fought on'

6. oþ hie alle lægon butan anum Bryttiscum gisle
   'Until they were all dead except for one Celtic hostage'

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7. ond _se_ swiþ gewundad wæs
   'And he was sorely wounded'

Here the topics which are different from the subject of the preceding clause have been italicised. In 3, the quasi-passive nature of the construction is particularly evident: "they were each offered money and their lives by the nobleman." Continuity of actual subject in the grammatical sense of 'noun in the nominative case' is less important than sentence position and the informational content of the referential pronoun which links the clauses to one another. This characteristic, incidentally, suggests that early Old English was to a large extent still a "topic" language rather than a "subject" language. [4]

The last set of data which I shall consider in detail is from Russian. The Russian verb is organized into broad parallel systems known as aspects: a perfective aspect (on _procital,_ 'he read'), and an imperfective aspect (on _cital,_ 'he read'). Much has been written about these two 'views' of actions and events. It seems that the common ground of perfectivity is the attitude toward the event or action as something completed, i.e. a view of the event or action as a whole; while the imperfective aspect is appropriate for a view of the action or event not necessarily as incomplete, but as a ground for an entry point not yet mentioned, and therefore by extension as a continuous happening. The complexities of Russian aspect involve many subtleties of lexical specialization, situation, and semantic extensions of the kind just mentioned, such as iterativity, durativity, punctuality, and other modes of action sometimes known as Aktionsarten; yet all of these appear to be derivable from the combination of true perfectivity or imperfectivity with inherent lexical meanings of verbs. To take an obvious case, the imperfective use of a punctual verb is likely to receive an iterative interpretation, etc., and it might in fact in a given case not be possible to tell whether an action is iterative or continuous except by the context; such ambiguities are not peculiar to the supposed 'aspect-languages', of course.

With these cautions, I shall attempt to show a series of important parallels between the function of the various phenomena involving sequencing of events in French, Malay, and Old English, and the verbal aspect systems of Russian. I shall suggest that in fact the whole question of 'aspect' is fundamentally the specialization of morphological forms for discourse functions of this kind.

The Russian examples in this section are taken from the most recent extensive treatment of Russian aspect, J. Forsyth's A Grammar of Aspect. In this treatment, the relationship of aspect to focus in the sentence is frequently apparent. Perfective aspect is characteristic of sentences in which there is a neutral distribution of information over the constituents of the clause, i.e. a distribution such that the subject is topical (old information), and the verb and its complements share the weight of new information, that is, there is predicate focus. The imperfective, on the other hand, is typically used when one of the constituents receives alone the central focus of information. This distribution is exemplified in the following examples, which are all taken from Forsyth, op. cit. pp. 82-88; superscript i/p denote aspects.

1. Kto pisal^i 'Voynu i Mir'? - Tolstoy pisal^i
   'Who wrote "War and Peace"? - Tolstoy wrote

'Voynu i Mir'.
"War and Peace"'

The focus is on the subject, and the predicate, in both the question and the answer, is not _asserted,_ i.e. the point of the exchange is not to claim that 'War and Peace' was written, but to elicit, and give, the name of the author. Similarly:

2. Kto segodya ubiral^i komnatu? Pochemu tak mnogo pyli?
   'Who cleaned the room today? Why is ther so much dust?'
   -Ya ubiral^i komnatu vchera, a kto ubiral^i segodnya, ne znayu.
   'I cleaned the room yesterday, but I don't know who cleaned it today'

Again, in each instance of ubiral "cleaned", the cleaning of the room is not being asserted, but is presupposed, and it is the identity of the cleaner which is in question. In the next pair of examples (3 and 4), the contrast between perfective aspect, with its even distribution of information over verb and object and topicality (oldness) of subject, and the imperfective, with its "skewed" emphasis on the subject, is seen nicely in the aspect of the verb _vyzival_ (imperfective) / _vyzval_ (perfective):

3. Safonov: Eto verno. A pisatelya vyzval^p ?
   Ilyin: Vyzval^p.
   'Safonov: That's true. Have you summoned the writer?
   Ilyin: I have.'
4. Pozvonili^p iz obkoma. Vyzyval^i Blikin.
   'There was a phone call from the Regional Committee. It was Blikin calling.'

Subject or agent focus is not the only distribution which can elicit imperfective aspect. As long as the principal assertion of the sentence does not lie in the verb and its immediate complements, there will typically be imperfective aspect. The next example has instrument focus:

5. v etoy poternoy ya obdumyval svoyu dissertatsiyu i napisal^p pervoye lyubovnoye pis'mo k Vere. Pisal^i karandashom.
   'In this tavern I pondered my thesis and wrote my first love letter to Vera. I wrote it in pencil.'

In extended discourse, the relationship of perfective to imperfective can be used in a manner which closely resembles the foregrounding/backgrounding distinction described above for French, Malay, and Old English. The perfective aspect is found mainly in kinetic, sequential events which are central to the unfolding of the narrative. The beginning of one event is contingent upon the completion of the preceding event, and it is from this contingency that the notion of completeness which is characteristic of perfective aspect derives--the idea of the action viewed "as a whole". Imperfective aspect is used typically for backgrounding: situations, descriptions, and actions, and actions which are simultaneous or overlapping with a perfective event; the distribution is closely parallel to the French use of imperfect and passé historique. The following extended example (Forsyth,

illustrates this:

1. K tryom chasam dnya vy vyshli[p] na peschaniy
   bugor sredi bolot...
   'Towards 3 o'clock we emerged upon a sandy
   hillock surrounded by marshes...'
2. Den' bistro temnel[i],
   'Daylight was slowly fading,'
3. sumerki uzhe zarozhdalis'[i] pod neprivetlivym
   nebom,
   'twilight was fading under an unfriendly sky,'
4. i priblizhalas'[i] noch'...
   'and night was approaching...'
5. My krichali[i]
   'We shouted'
6. i prislushivalis'[i].
   'and listened for a reply'
7. Veter shumel[i] v otvet v myortvykh chashchakh
   'The wind sighed from the lifeless thickets,'
8. i prinosil[i] khriploye karkan'e voron'ikh stay.
   'and carried to us the hoarse cawing of flocks of
   crows.'
9. Potom gde-to za krayem zemli i bolot poslyshal-
   sya[p] otvetniy krik, protyazhniy i slabiy.
   'The from somewhere beyond the end of the earth
   marshes an answering call was heard, faint and
   drawn-out.'
10. Golos priblizhalsya[i].
    'The voice was coming nearer.'
11. Zareshchal[p] osinnik.
    'There came a cracking of twigs in an aspen thicket
    thicket.'
12. golos poslyshalsya[p] sovsem ryadom,
    'the voice rang out close at hand,'
13. iz chashchi vyshchel[p] vesnushchatiy mal'chik...
    'and out of the thicket stepped a freckle-faced
    boy...'
14. On ostorozhno shagal[i] po valezhniku bocymi
    nogami
    'He stepped carefully over the fallen branches
    in bare feet'
15. i nyoc[i] v rukakh stariye sapogi.
    'and was carrying in his hands a pair of old boots.'
16. On podoshyol[p] k nam
    'He came up to us'
17. i zastenchivo pozdorovalsya[p].
    'and shyly greeted us.'

Dynamic, single events are indicated by perfective verbs
(1, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17). Accompanying, descriptive, and
repeated situations are represented by imperfectives (2-8,
10, 14, 15).

The examples of aspectual usage in Russian given by
Forsyth show clearly that for the past tense aspects the
parameters of focus distribution and of seriality (sequencing
of events) are important selectors for perfective and imper-
fective verbs. It is, however, possible that focus itself can
be reduced to a function of event sequencing. To see how
this can be so, we must consider the typical course of a
narrative discourse.

A narrative discourse typically begins with a set of
descriptive statements placing the main thread of the narra-
tive into a geographical and historical setting. It is inevit-
able that this "stage-setting" introductory sequence will in-
volve the mention of several, perhaps many, new topics:

dramatis personae, landscapes, etc. There is a good
chance that some of these introductions or 'presentations'
will take place in the preverbal, subject part of the sentence
rather than in the predicate. Consequently, an association
is made between imperfectivity and subject focus. On the
other hand, the main thread of the discourse usually centers
on one or a rather small number of subjects, almost always
human, and carrying a high degree of presupposition or top-
icality. Typically, then, the kinetic, sequenced events of
the narrative are characterized by predicate focus, and pre-
dicate focus, the least marked form of focus, is associated
with perfectivity.

I have been assuming, simplistically, that the most
normal form of information distribution within a sentence
is that in which the subject is 'old' and the verb and its
immediate complements are 'new' (asserted). However,
this distribution is not absolute, but depends on the lexical
content of individual constituents of the sentence. For exam-
ple, some verbs typically deflect focus onto the subject;
these are 'presentatives', such as appear, arrive, etc.
Another set of verbs in which subject focusing is frequent,
and should not necessarily be considered marked, is the set
of dispositional verbs, characterized by an 'expected' rela-
tionship between the subject and the verb:[5]
1. A light flashed.
2. A bell rang.
3. A fire crackled.
There are many complications of this sort, and the question
is increased in difficulty by the fact that many of the pheno-
mena involved are not discrete but must be regarded as
placed along a continuum. As a result, the selection of this
or that form conditioned by 'focus' may appear to be entire-
ly subjective and even arbitrary. It is hardly surprizing
that verbal aspect is considered the most difficult part of a
language to control for the non-native speaker.

In this paper, I have attempted to show an intriguing
and complex set of interconnections between narrative lan-
guage, focus, and aspect. I shall sum up these interconnec-
tions in an idealized framework, which is approached to a
greater or lesser extent by all of the languages discussed.
The basic framework is quite possibly universal, and lan-
guages differ among one another according to the degree of
overtness with which the various functions are indicated, and
the selection of one or more of the functions for special mor-
pho-syntactic marking. The terminology selected for the di-
chotomy is perfective/imperfective, although I am not alto-
gether happy with this choice, and would be glad to replace
it with terms which are not so closely linked to Slavic aspect
and the traditional idea of completed vs. uncompleted actions.

PERFECTIVE	IMPERFECTIVE
Strict chronological sequencing	Simultaneity or chronological overlapping of situation C with event A and/or B.
View of event as a whole, whose completion is a necessary prerequisite to a subsequent event	View of a situation or happening whose completion is not a necessary prerequisite to a subsequent happening
Identity of subject within each discrete episode	Frequent changes of subject
Unmarked distribution of focus in clause, with pre-supposition of subject and	Marked distribution of focus, e.g., subject focus, instrument focus, focus on

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assertion in verb and its immediate complements (or other unmarked focus)	sentence adverbial.
Human topics	Variety of topics, including natural phenomena
Dynamic, kinetic events	Static, descriptive situations
Foregrounding. Event indispensible to narrative	Backgrounding. State or situation necessary for understanding motives, attitudes, etc.

I should again emphasize that this dichotomy is idealized, and is modified by particular languages in highly specific ways. Moreover, the parts of the dichotomy can be extended, and these extensions can themselves become grammaticalized. The requirement that the perfective event be completed prior to the next perfective event, for example, can lead diachronically to the elaboration of a system of tenses, in which the sequencing of two events is less important than the notion of anteriority implicit in this sequencing. Insistence on the dichotomy is likely to be more rigid in languages which have morphological paradigms differentiating the two areas (French, Russian), than in languages where loosely attached clitic particles (Malay) or simply word order (Old English) are pressed into service to indicate it. The close association of the dichotomy with literary style may result in the restriction of the usage to a written register, as has happened with Malay and French. Obviously, many diachronic paths are possible.

The area seems to be one worthy of considerable investigation, particularly by specialists in individual languages. The uses of the aorist in Indo-European languages such as Greek and Sanskrit[6] are unquestionably bound up with narrative focus. Swahili has a verbal prefix ka- whose use recalls strongly some of the phenomena dealt with in this paper: strict seriality and relevance to the kinetic development of the discourse. More conjectural, but equally intriguing is the possibility that tense-aspect markers might be derived from narrative focus particles. I have pointed out that standard grammars of Malay consistently refer to the 'preterite' signification of the narrative particle -lah; it is questionable whether this meaning can be extracted outside the strict framework of the narrative (in which case it means simply that Western grammarians regard narratives as necessarily 'preterite'), but at the same time there may well be more certain examples. Perhaps the "primary ending" present tense marker of Proto-Indo-European, -i, was once such a narrative marker, and also the puzzling ga- prefix in Germanic, which appears to waver between seriality and perfectivity.

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FOOTNOTES

1. This terminology--foreground and backbround-- is discussed in Pollack, 1976, p. 298 as premier plan and arrière-plan. Pollack gives a useful history of the terms, ascribing them to the Slavist Koschmieder in 1934, but pointing out also that the terms fon/nastep had become current among Russian linguists in the 1920's.

2. Particles denoting 'main thread of narrative' are mentioned by Longacre, 1976. However, Longacre does not supply actual data, and refers only to unpublished materials, so that it is difficult to know in what way these are comparable to the Malay usage.

3. Cf. Hopper, 1975, 58-61 et passim.

4. For the topic-language/subject-language distinction, see Li and Thompson, 1975. It should be noted that in this account of Old English I am at variance with Fleischmann (1973), who regards OV syntax in Germanic as the background word order. Fleischmann considers only Old High German, relying on Fourquet's 1938 monograph L'ordre des Eléments de la Phrase en Germanique Ancien for the analysis of the other Germanic languages. The subject requires, however, a much more up-to-date analysis based on the

typological study of word-order and word-order functions. Furthermore, Old English offers specimens of indigenous narrative prose which are not available in Old High German.

5. I am indebted to Leonard Babby for drawing my

attention to this distinction.

6. Cf. Gonda 1960. Similar phenomena are pointed out for Old Russian by C. van Schooneveld, 1959.

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AUSTRONESIAN CULTURE HISTORY: SOME LINGUISTIC INFERENCES AND THEIR RELATIONS TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD *

Robert Blust

ABSTRACT

Although subject to limitations of its own, historical linguistics can illuminate fragments of the human cultural past that are often irrecoverable from the archaeological record. Where both lines of evidence bear on a common referent they may be mutually corroboratory or contradictory. A number of inferences of all three types are considered, and certain conclusions reached which differ markedly from recent word-based reconstructions of Austronesian culture history, but lend support to the early ideas of Kern (1889). In particular, it is argued that the original Austronesian speakers (circa 4,000 B.C.) were sedentary villagers who possessed (in addition to a universally acknowledged sophisticated maritime technology) root and grain crops, the pig, dog and fowl, pottery, apparently some knowledge of iron, probably the loom and possibly an indigenous syllabary. To account for a variety of observations it is simplest to assume that this community was located west of the Wallace Line, and that Austronesian culture history in its eastern efflorescence was to a significant extent a history of (material) culture loss.

1. INTRODUCTION

TWO METHODS OF PREHISTORIC INFERENCE. If we discount studies of the modern distribution of culture-traits (e.g. the analysis of 'culture areas' by scholars such as Wissler, or the 'culture-historical method' of the German diffusionist Kulkurkreis school) as a major method of prehistoric inference, it can be argued that there are two dominant disciplines relevant to the reconstruction of the preliterate human cultural past: archaeology and linguistics. The demands of archaeological method differ from those of linguistics in requiring direct observation of some features of the past that is to be reconstructed. These features, however, are limited to surviving elements of material culture, and their interpretation as evidence for prehistoric cultural connections or contacts is based on similarities in which the role of independent invention often looms large.

THE COMPARATIVE METHOD. The historical linguist compares attested linguistic forms in two or more languages, and based on the establishment of regular correspondences of sound in words of related meaning (i.e. cognate words), posits ancestral forms (proto-forms, etyma or reconstructions) from which the observed cognates (called reflexes in relation to their reconstructed prototypes) can most simply and naturally be derived. The chief strength of this systematic procedure of comparison and reconstruction (the Comparative Method) is the almost complete arbitrariness and great range of combinatorial possibilities for the sound-meaning relationship in language as compared with the more limited possibilities and weaker demands of correspondence for such other cultural features as house types, art motifs, etc. Not only does this characteristic of language drastically reduce the role of chance as a plausible explanation for the resemblances observed, but the general regularity of phonological change in many cases provides a supplemen-